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Military Rule and the Problem of Legitimacy: Peru, 1968-1975 and Argentina, 1976-1983

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APPROVED:

Peter S Cleaves

To Pamela, the love of my life,

and to Alex, our pride and joy.

MILITARY RULE AND THE PROBLEM OF LEGITIMACY

PERU, 1968-1975 AND ARGENTINA, 1976-1983

by

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REPORT

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CHAPTER 1

MILITARY RULE AND THE PROBLEM OF LEGITIMACY

The institutional military regimes that came to power in Peru in 1968 and Argentina in 1976, although radically different in many respects, were similar in that they intended to impose significant political and socioeconomic changes on their societies. Consequently, after their coups, the military regimes did not return to the barracks after restoring order or installing an acceptable civilian government. Instead, they ruled for an extended period of time. In each case, however, the regimes were forced to make unscheduled departures without having achieved their stated objectives.

Why did these military regimes fall from power? Finer provides a possible explanation when he states that the armed forces suffer from two "crippling" political weaknesses: their technical inability to administer and their lack of legitimacy to rule.[1] While most studies of the failure of military rule have tended to examine the problems of military political management, this paper focuses on the military's lack of legitimacy. The purpose of this report, then, is to examine the problem of legitimacy and the impact it had in the downfall of military rule in Peru and Argentina.

This paper argues that establishing legitimacy was a

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[1]S. E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, Second, enlarged edition, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 12.

fundamental concern of both regimes and that their failure to do so contributed significantly to their downfall. This chapter begins with an analysis of the generic problem of legitimacy. It looks at the ways militaries have attempted to legitimize their rise to power in the past and how they have attempted to legitimize extended rule. In chapters two and three, I then examine Peru and Argentina, respectively, starting with the conditions that led to the coups and the military's objectives while in power. Finally, in chapter four, I compare the ways the two regimes attempted to establish legitimacy, offer explanations for the similarities or differences in their approaches, and analyze why both regimes failed in their attempts.

Legitimacy

Before analyzing the problem of legitimacy for military rule it might be prudent to begin by addressing two basic questions: what is legitimacy? And is it important? Basically, legitimacy involves the claim to a moral right to rule. Easton defines legitimacy as a reflection of the fact that a member of a political system believes that system functions in agreement with "his own moral principles, [and] his own sense of what is right and proper in the political sphere."[2] Barker sees legitimacy as the belief in the state's "authority to issue

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[2]David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*, (New York, 1965), p.278, quoted in Jacques van Doorn, "The Military and the Crisis of Legitimacy," in *The Military and the Problem of Legitimacy*, eds. Gwyn Harries-Jenkins and Jacques van Doorn, (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 1976), pp. 19-20.

commands, so that those commands are obeyed not simply out of fear or self interest, but because they are believed in some sense to have moral authority."[3]

Linz's definition is minimal but relevant: legitimacy is the belief that "in spite of shortcomings and failures, the existing political institutions are better than any other that might be established, and that they therefore can demand obedience."[4] Stepan takes a similar view; when talking about the legitimacy of a government or of a political role for the military, the concern is "with what the participant civilian groups considered appropriate political processes, given all the circumstance."[5] Lipset, on the other hand, focuses on legitimacy as an acquirement of the political system itself: "The capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society."[6]

It is evident by these definitions that there are two parties involved when dealing with legitimacy: one that claims the right to

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[3]Rodney Barker, *Political Legitimacy and the State*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 11.

[4]Juan J. Linz, "Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration," in *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, eds. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 16.

[5]Alfred Stepan, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 66.

[6]Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Basis of Politics*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960), p. 77, quoted in Jacques van Doorn, "The Military and the Crisis of Legitimacy," in *The Military and the Problem of Legitimacy*, eds. Gwyn Harries-Jenkins and Jacques van Doorn, (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 1976), p. 20.

exercise authority and the other that accepts this right and grants recognition to the other's claim. Since this paper focuses on the actions taken by militaries to establish legitimacy and how their failure to do so affected their downfall, I will use Lipset's definition while noting Stepan's point that what the "participant civilian groups" believe to be appropriate political processes is equally important.

Defining what we mean by legitimacy, however, does not tell us why it is important. On a basic level, legitimacy is important due to the prevalent desire by elites to justify their domination. Weber stated this clearly when noting that:

> no system of authority voluntarily limits itself to the appeal to material or affectual or ideal motives as a basis for guaranteeing its continuance. In addition every such system attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy.[7]

In addition, legitimacy is important on a practical level because of its productive qualities. "The statesman needs or wants legitimacy," Ilchman and Uphoff state, "because to the extent he has it, he needs to expend fewer resources to secure compliance with a policy."[8] Legitimacy, then, contributes to the ability of a government to enforce its decisions.

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[7]Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, Translated by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, ed. Talcott Parsons, (New York: The Free Press, 1964), p. 325.

[8]Warren F. Ilchman and Norman Thomas Uphoff, *The Political Economy of Change*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 73.

Legitimacy is important because a government cannot adequately rule by using force or the threat of force alone. This is not to say that a regime cannot rule without legitimacy, but that "the threat of physical compulsion is not an efficient, i.e. an economical, way of securing obedience."[9] Without a legitimate right to rule, a regime based on force will need to rely increasingly on coercion in order to maintain itself. In addition, rule by force alone will eventually invite a challenge from anyone strong enough to try. This helps explain the fact that military coups are often followed by a succession of counter-coups. Ultimately, then, no government can survive without a substantial number of its citizens acknowledging its legitimate right to govern.[10]

In addition to defining what we mean by legitimacy and why it is important, it is also useful to distinguish among different types of legitimacy. In his typology, Weber distinguishes between charismatic, traditional, and rational-legal legitimacy on the basis of their claims to legitimacy. Charismatic legitimacy, for example, rests on the popular devotion to the leader's "exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character."[11] But the scarcity of charismatic leaders makes this type of legitimacy very rare. Nordlinger calculated that among more than

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[9]S. E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, Second, enlarged edition, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 16.

[10]Ibid., pp. 15-18.

[11]Weber, p. 328.

one hundred non-Western military governments, only two charismatic leaders have emerged - Perón in Argentina and Nasser in Egypt.[12]

The basis for traditional legitimacy stems from the demonstrated belief in the sanctity of long-standing traditions. In this case, legitimacy is granted to the leader who occupies the traditional position of authority and who, in turn, is bound by that tradition.[13] Although military rule has been commonplace throughout Latin America, it has never been considered an acceptable practice. Consequently, the military cannot rely on traditional grounds to legitimize its rule. It may still be possible, however, for the military to legitimize themselves by conforming to traditional symbols and practices. But this approach has serious limitations; the few military governments that have tried have rarely succeeded in legitimizing their rule on traditional grounds. Nasser's attempt under the uncommonly favorable conditions found in Egypt, for example, only found partial success.[14]

Governments are most often legitimized on rational-legal grounds. The basis for rational-legal legitimacy rests on the belief in the "'legality' of patterns of normative rules," that the government's rules follow valued procedural principles as set forth by law.[15]

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[12]Eric A. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Praeger, 1982), p. 129.
[13]Weber, p. 328.
[14]Nordlinger, pp. 130-131.
[15]Weber, p. 328.

Rational-legal legitimacy, then, refers to the legal process by which someone is selected to rule as well as how the ruler performs, since his actions are governed and limited by constitutional procedures and the rights given to citizens by the same constitution.[16] The principle source of rational-legal legitimacy is popular election. In this sense, the legitimacy that comes from following valued democratic procedures is strengthened by the claim to represent "the people." The only alternative to rational-legal legitimacy in Latin America has been the claim to revolutionary legitimacy. But even revolutionary movements that have claimed to receive a mandate from the people establish formal rules and conduct elections in order to get additional legitimacy, as was the case in Mexico, Cuba, and Nicaragua.[17]

Military Rule and Legitimacy

In Latin America, intervention by the military into politics has been a historic constant. But as the character of military intervention has changed over time, so too have the ways the military has attempted to legitimize its rule. The period following independence from Spain was dominated by the military liberators who, in the absence of legitimate civilian authority, imposed their own despotic rule. These *caudillos* were largely motivated by individual ambition and, consequently, had little need to legitimate their rule or justify

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[16]Nordlinger, p. 133.

[17]Martin C. Needler, *The Problem of Democracy in Latin America*, (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1987), p. 65.

their seizure of power.[18] As the national states consolidated in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the armies of the larger countries were professionalized under the training of French or German military missions. But the professionalization of the military did not remove them from the political arena. Instead, it changed the character of military intervention from the acts of individual military members to the acts of the military as an institution.[19]

After the Great Depression and especially following World War II, military interventions thus began to appear as what Nordlinger calls moderators or guardians, depending on the extent of governmental power exercised and the policy objectives desired. Military moderators did not take control of the government but acted as a powerful interest group to exercise veto power in order to preserve the status quo. Guardians, on the other hand, took control of the government to correct deficiencies and protect the status quo.[20] In both cases, the military's intervention was legitimized by references to protecting the constitution and by promises to establish fair elections and return the country to democracy. That this type of military intervention was generally accepted in Latin America is evident by the

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[18]Ibid., p. 57; and Edwin Lieuwen, "The Problem of Military Government," in *New Military Politics in Latin America*, ed. Robert Wesson, (New York: Praeger, 1982), pp. 3-4.

[19]Needler, pp. 56-57,

[20]Nordlinger, pp. 21-23.

fact that fifteen countries in the region specifically gave the military the role of protecting the constitution.[21]

Beginning in 1964, the character of military intervention in Latin America changed dramatically as one military regime after another claimed it was going to rule indefinitely. This new pattern of military involvement in politics reflected changes in the international environment that led to the adoption of national security doctrines by many Latin American armed forces. This doctrine basically stated that since guerrilla movements draw their support from those suffering from adverse social and economic conditions, an effective program for national defense needs to deal with those conditions. Thus, national development becomes an integral part of national security, making it the military's function to take control of the "national government in order to reform national society, implement an economic development program, and remove other obstacles to modernization."[22]

This link between internal security and national development led to a greater focus on studying political problems in national war colleges. As Stepan notes: "The scope of military concern for, and study of, politics became unrestricted, so that the "new professional" military man was highly politicized."[23] This new way of thinking

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[21]Stepan, *The Military in Politics*, p. 79.

[22]Needler, pp. 7-8.

[23]Stepan, "The New Professionalism of Internal Warfare and Military Role Expansion," in *Armies and Politics in Latin America, eds.*

changed the military's old views of their illegitimacy and inability to rule the country. Taking control of the government was not a transgression but an act of patriotism inasmuch as it saved the country from subversion. While the training in all aspects of economic, social, and political life gave the military a sense of managerial expertise and the confidence that they alone could manage the economy.[24]

Any government can acquire legitimacy by its legal title to office, its claims to represent the people, and its satisfactory performance in office. The military, however, has a very different view. While pointing to a return to democracy sometime in the future, the military wanted to legitimize its extended rule with a claim to be representing the "national interest." And as the only ones that could establish the order necessary to sustain economic growth, they were confident that their performance in office would gain them the legitimacy needed to sustain their rule.[25]

Abraham E. Lowenthal and J. Samuel Fitch, (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1986), p. 137.

[24]Ibid., pp. 137-138.

[25]Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*, (Baltimore: Tho Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 15.

The Problem of Legitimation

A basic problem for military rule in Latin America has been the inability to generate an alternative to democratically derived legitimacy. Military regimes do not claim to construct a new system of political values in opposition to democracy and thereby create a new legitimacy. The doctrine of national security, therefore, although it served to build a consensus within the military for taking power, cannot substitute for a legitimizing ideology.[26] In contrast, European authoritarian regimes of the inter-war period promoted themselves as alternative solutions to the problems of factional democracies and sought to legitimize their rule using the mobilizing imagery of fascism. But fascism's failure in World War II totally discredited it as a viable form of government and, consequently, authoritarian regimes emerging since then have been forced to search for other alternatives to democratically derived legitimacy.[27]

The dominant political preference in Latin America, however, remains liberal and democratic.[28] This poses an obvious problem for legitimizing extended military rule. "Those who hold military power

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[26]Alain Rouquié, "Demilitarization and the Institutionalization of Military-Dominated Polities in Latin America," in *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 111.

[27]O'Donnell and Schmitter, p. 15.

[28]See J. Samuel Fitch, "Armies and Politics in Latin America: 1975-1985," in *Armies and Politics in Latin America, eds.* Abraham E. Lowenthal and J. Samuel Fitch, (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1986), p. 32; also Rouquié, "Demilitarization"," p. 110

know that, whatever they say, there still exists above them a superior legitimacy, that of the constitutional order."[29] This helps to explain why the military practice authoritarian rule and repression and yet promise to restore democracy in the future. Even when not promising a return to democracy, the fact remains that all recent cases of military rule have transitioned to democratic rule. The primacy of democracy is a fact of life for the military and, ultimately, they must invoke it for their own legitimation. The military may propose to strengthen democracy, or improve and protect it, but never destroy it completely.[30]

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[29]Rouquié, "Demilitarization," p. 110.

[30]Ibid., p. 111.

CHAPTER 2

PERU: 1968-1975

In 1968, General Juan Velasco Alvarado came to power, heading a "revolutionary" military government that attempted to advance unprecedented reforms. The new regime sought to raise the economic level of the masses and thereby settle class interests at the expense of the traditional elites. With the exception of Cuba, Peru's agrarian reform was the most far-reaching in Latin America. The revolutionary government also developed innovative programs for workers to gain control and partial ownership of enterprises.[1]

The socioeconomic reforms initially helped establish the Velasco government's popular legitimacy. However, support for the regime diminished with time. In the end, the lack of popular support proved to be a key factor in the success of the putsch in August 1975 by General Morales Bermúdez. McClintock notes that although the imminent economic crisis, the threatening geopolitical context with Pinochet's rise in Chile, and Velasco's worsening illness were all of great importance to the military officers who sought a new "centrist" leadership, it was Velasco's "inability to legitimize his government over

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[1]Cynthia McClintock, "Velasco, Officers, and Citizens: The Politics of Stealth," in *The Peruvian Experiment Reconsidered*, eds. Cynthia McClintock and Abraham Lowenthal, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 275.

the course of almost seven years [that] enabled the officers to oust Velasco easily, without fear of popular protest."[2]

In order to understand the context of the Velasco government's quest for legitimacy, this chapter begins with an outline of the conditions leading to the coup and the objectives the military sought to achieve while in power. I then analyze the attempts made be the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces (GRFA) to create legitimacy and examine why those attempts failed. Finally, I discuss the fall of the regime and how the GRFA's failure to create legitimacy contributed to its demise.

Background to the Coup

When Fernando Belaúnde Terry won the presidential election in 1963, nearly all the political parties agreed that the implementation of certain basic reforms was essential in order to achieve the development that Peru needed.[3] But due to the lingering power of the export oligarchy and the tenacious opposition of the largest and oldest mass-based party in Peru, the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), the Belaúnde regime failed in its attempts at reform. In the Congress, APRA and groups linked to the oligarchy made things

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[2]Ibid., p. 276.

[3]Luis Pásara, "When the Military Dreams," in *The Peruvian Experiment Reconsidered*, eds. Cynthia McClintock and Abraham Lowenthal, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 310.

difficult for the president by passing bills without the funding needed for implementation or by simply not considering legislation. In order to continue many projects, Belaúnde was forced to obtain short-term loans or resort to deficit spending which then contributed to a rise in inflation as well as a record national debt of $700 million by 1968. When these conditions led to a drastic devaluation, the government lost legitimacy since Belaúnde had promised that a currency devaluation would not occur.[4]

The failings of the Belaúnde administration were further exacerbated by smuggling scandals involving members of his family and government officials. Then, in September 1968, spectacular denunciations arose regarding a contract between the Peruvian government and the International Petroleum Company (IPC) in which it appeared that the foreign company had "bested" Peru.[5] Belaúnde's apparent willingness to compromise with special interests and conservative political actors along with the failure to implement the social reforms that the military had strongly supported and viewed as necessary, helped to discredit the entire civilian process. For the military the problems reached crisis levels over the effectiveness, appropriateness, and legitimacy of the political system in meeting the

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[4]David Scott Palmer, "Reformist Military Rule in Peru, 1968-80," in *New Military Politics in Latin America*, ed. Robert Wesson, (New York: Praeger, 1982), pp. 138-139.
[5]Ibid.

challenges of development and, subsequently, led the military to conclude that a coup was necessary.[6]

The Military's Objectives

Taking power within this context, the military government was united around two broad objectives: national independence and development. For the military, the IPC scandal was indicative of Peru's dependence since Belaúnde had subordinated the national interest and yielded to the influence of a foreign company. The oligarchy was also blamed for Peru's dependency in that they increased their wealth by acting as the agents of imperialism, serving their own interest instead of the nation's. The GRFA's objective, Gorman notes, was to break "the country's political, economic and military dependency on North America."[7]

To exercise national independence, the military government practiced a more assertive foreign policy. Peru actively advocated political and economic concerns of many underdeveloped nations and began to support these causes in international forums. Peru also joined the Andean Pact, whose provisions were designed to

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[6]David Collier, *Squatters and Oligarchs: Authoritarian Rule and Policy Change in Peru*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 95.

[7]Stephen M. Gorman, "The Peruvian Revolution in Historical Perspective," in *Post-Revolutionary Peru: The Politics of Transformation*, ed. Stephen M. Gorman, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), p. 6.

restructure economic relations with foreign firms in order to better serve the national interest. In addition, diplomatic relations were opened up with Soviet Bloc countries. The military government received economic support from the Soviet Union and negotiated a very favorable arms deal, consequently abandoning its former primary arms supplier - the United States.[8]

The military's overarching objective, however, was national development. To develop, Peru needed to forge a modern industrial society as well as an efficient agrarian sector. The military's first step was to eliminate the landed oligarchy, whom the military considered to be an obstacle to development. This was done by implementing the agrarian reform program that eradicated the *latifundia*.[9] By expropriating the *latifundias*, the military government ended the oligarchy's practice of transferring capital from agriculture to real estate and commerce, hoping to increase agricultural productivity. The land reform also resulted in a redistribution of income that contributed to a modest expansion of the domestic market, thereby stimulating growth. Lastly, the land reform provided a way to reduce

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[8]Ibid., p. 7; and Palmer, pp. 140-141.

[9]For an extensive analysis of the agrarian reform see Peter S. Cleaves and Martin J. Scurrah, *Agriculture, Bureaucracy, and the Military Government in Peru*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989).

peasant unrest and even incorporate large numbers of the population as citizens.[10]

To achieve development, the military government envisioned a larger role for the state. The state undertook increased supervision of foreign capital so that investments would be channelled to the economic activities most beneficial to Peru. As Gorman states, the military government redefined "the rules for investment and altered the incentives to encourage greater private investment in specific areas of production, while reserving certain 'key' industrial sectors to the state."[11]

The military government also developed innovative structural reforms designed to do away with the old elitist and corrupt way of implementing socioeconomic policies. One of these reforms, the Industrial Community, was to result in worker-ownership and management, while the Social Property law was to provide the foundation for Peruvian socialism.[12] It was evident that for the military, development was more than an increase in the gross national product; it was a combination of growth and equity. As Villanueva

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[10]Pásara, p. 311; and George D. E. Philip, *The Rise and Fall of the Peruvian Military Radicals: 1968-1976*, University of London Institute of Latin American Studies Monograph No. 9 (London: The Athalon Press, 1978), pp. 117-118.

[11]Gorman, pp. 7-8.

[12]Henry A. Dietz, *Poverty and Problem-Solving Under Military Rule: The Urban Poor in Lima, Peru*, (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1980), p. 23.

states, the military proclaimed that "power would not be relinquished until society had been completely reordered along new, more equitable lines."[13]

The Search for Legitimacy

Before analyzing what the military government did to create legitimacy, it is necessary to begin with an examination of the regime's claims to legitimacy and how it justified or self-legitimized its new role as ruler. Prior to 1968, the military officers believed that in comparison to civilians, they lacked both capacity and legitimacy to rule. This partly explains why the previous military governments had only been caretaker or transitional in form.[14] In 1968, however, the experiences of the officers involved in the *coup*, most of whom had either studied at the Center for Higher Military Studies (CAEM) or had served in the intelligence services of the military, resulted in a radically different orientation.[15]

CAEM had developed a specialized year-long course emphasizing matters of national political, economic, and social development. Critical assessments of Peru's development blamed the national

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[13]Victor Villanueva, "Peru's 'New' Military Professionalism: The Failure of the Technocratic Approach," in *Post-Revolutionary Peru: The Politics of Transformation*, ed. Stephen M. Gorman, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), p. 158.

[14]Stepan, *Military in Politics*, 172; and Philip, *Peruvian Military Radicals*, p. 51.

[15]Villanueva, p. 159.

condition on both the oligarchy and the political parties. The course of study in public administration led to a growing perception of the institutional unity of the armed forces, in stark contrast to the inefficiency of civilian bureaucrats. In effect, CAEM encouraged a sense that the military would be better able to lead the country than either the civilian elites or the political parties.[16]

The officers that served in the intelligence services were the veterans of the counterinsurgency activities of the mid-1960s. These officers had penetrated the world of the peasants and had seen first hand the pitiful conditions of the rural poor.[17] Although the victory in the brief guerrilla war increased the military's self-confidence, they saw themselves as defending the interests of the oligarchy by repressing the demands of the landless. Even though the guerrilla war was won fairly quickly, the military saw the potential for a latent insurgency and realized that a failure to make structural changes and stimulate development could provoke another internal war.[18]

The guerrilla war crystallized the sense of unity among the officers. This unity of purpose was based on the consensus that

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[16]Louis De Sipio, "SINAMOS: State Sponsored Social Mobilization in Revolutionary Peru," (MA Thesis: University of Texas at Austin, 1984), p. 17.

[17]Villanueva, p. 159.

[18]Stepan, *The State and Society: Peru in Comparative Perspective*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 133-134; and De Sipio, p. 18.

development was an integral part of the national security of the country. General Marcial Romero Pardo, CAEM's chief architect, gave an example of this thinking when he wrote:

> The obliteration of the low standards of life, i.e., illiteracy and insalubrity etc., [are of such importance] that it is, nowadays, not possible to pose national defense problems disjoined from those of the socioeconomic development of the nation.[19]

In the end, the ideology developed at CAEM, together with the studies done at the intelligence schools, succeeded in legitimizing for the military a new form of intervention in politics. Instead of considering a long term intervention in politics a transgression, the military viewed it as a legitimate and patriotic act. Because of the failures of the civilian political system, then, the military intervened as an institution to revive internal development and ultimately to ensure national security.[20]

Armed with this revolutionary ideology, the Velasco government acted immediately after coming to power to initiate a broad process of

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[19]Romero Pardo in Victor Villanueva, *El CAEM y La Revolucion de la Fuerza Armada*, (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1972), p. 58, quoted in Elpidio José Ceasar-Semper, "Urban Squatter Settlements Policy Under Military Rule: the Case of Lima, Peru and Rio de Janeiro, Brasil," (MA Thesis: University of Texas at Austin, 1981), p. 13.

[20]Villanueva, p. 159-60; and Henry A. Dietz and David Scott Palmer, "Citizen Participation Under Innovative Military Corporatism in Peru," in *Political Participation in Latin America*, Volume I, *Citizen and State*, eds. John Booth and Mitchell A. Seligson, (New York: Holmes & Meier Pub., 1978), p. 182.

socioeconomic reform and thereby establish its own popular legitimacy. Within days after taking power the military government nationalized the IPC, settling the highly nationalistic dispute over the company's ownership of subsoil rights. Whereas Belaúnde had attempted to reach a scandalous compromise with the oil company, the military promptly resolved the affair and gained immediate popular support and acclaim. In addition, General Velasco's radical speeches and ministerial visits throughout the country served to build an emotional link between the military and the general population and to cultivate a "revolutionary mystique."[21]

In their goals and objectives, the military government saw itself acting on behalf of the people and for the nations good. Consequently, they thought that their reforms which liberated the popular masses from their "chains of exploitation" would create ample support for the government policies.[22] Since limited space does not allow a review of all reforms, three major programs - agrarian reform, the Industrial Law, and SINAMOS - will be analyzed in order to examine the regime's attempts to create legitimacy.

Agrarian Reform. The aims of the agrarian reform enacted in June, 1969 were to both to increase production and to

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[21]De Sipio, pp. 20-21; and Kevin J. Middlebrook and David Scott Palmer, "Military Government and Political Development: Lessons from Peru," Sage Professional Papers in Comparative Politics, 5, 01-054 (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1975), pp. 14-15.
[22]Philip, *Peruvian Military Radicals*, p. 135.

redistributeincome in order to generate political support.[23] To this end, the reforms transferred lands and management responsibilities to many workers and greatly increased their profits. Over 350,000 families benefited from the land reform which expropriated some 8.4 million hectares.[24] But in the North Coast exporting *haciendas*, the strength of the Aprista trade union leaders made reorganizing the workers difficult, resulting in serious conflicts between the government economic managers and the workers. Government measures to control the cooperatives eventually led to Aprista-led strikes that seriously hindered production.[25]

While the military government focused on increasing the productivity of the efficient coastal cooperatives, Gorman states, "the revolutionary rhetoric that accompanied the declaration of the reform aroused the expectations of the landless sierra peasants," leading to considerable conflict.[26] Many peasants failed to qualify for the reforms since they had been non-tenant laborers in the highlands or only part-time workers on the coastal estates. This resulted in numerous land invasions in the highlands and increased labor tensions on the North Coast.[27]

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[23]Ibid., p. 119; and Gorman, p. 9.
[24]Palmer, p. 140.
[25]Philip, *Peruvian Military Radicals*, p. 121.
[26]Gorman, p. 10.
[27]Ibid., pp. 10-11.

Industrial Law. With the Industrial Law reforms enacted in 1970, the military government sought to harmonize owner-worker relations as well as increase industrial expansion.[28] These reforms required eligible private companies to distribute 10 percent of their earnings directly to the workers, provide the workers management participation proportionate to their level of ownership, and reinvest 15 percent of their profits in the worker's name until the workers acquired 50 percent ownership in the company.[29]

In spite of these reforms, however, worker unrest increased, in part because industrialists succeeded in undermining the government's reforms. By using accounting devices, the industrialists reduced the amount of profits and shares distributed to the workers so that by 1975, the industrial communities had received only 17 percent ownership in the sector. Thus, the military stirred the workers aspirations by promising that the reforms would benefit them greatly. In the end, however, it failed to deliver and fueled worker dissatisfaction with the military. In addition, the industrial law was opposed by both APRA and the communist party because it attempted to weaken their unions. The lack of popular support for the Velasco government was evident by the increased number of strikes. The average duration of strikes, the percentage of the labor force involved, as well as the number of strikes between 1973 and 1975 increased

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[28]Ibid., p. 11.

[29]Philip, *Peruvian Military Radicals*, p. 124; and Gorman, p. 11.

dramatically over the period between 1966 and 1968, more than doubling in most cases.[30]

SINAMOS. As the Velasco government's reforms were challenged by increasing opposition and conflict, the progressive wing of the military realized that mass mobilization was needed to offset such counterrevolutionary reactions. At this point, two issues dominated the selection of new political rules in Peru: how to establish government control over an increasingly restive society, and how to identify the appropriate mode of public involvement in the governing process. Wynia states that inevitably, "military leaders have to decide whether it is enough to rely on force alone to sustain their authority or whether some appeal for popular support is required for the new order to survive."[31] Choosing to appeal for popular support to legitimize their rule, the military government had three alternatives: create an official party; utilize one of the traditional parties; or reject all previous assumptions about the basis of political action and participation and redefine what constitutes political activity.[32]

The revolutionary military government chose the third option. Velasco's notion of a "full participatory social democracy" was meant both to legitimize the regime and serve as an alternative to political

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[30]McClintock, "Velasco, Officers, and Citizens," pp. 299-300.
[31]Gary W. Wynia, *The Politics of Latin American Development*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 219.
[32]Dietz, p. 173.

parties.[33] The key to the success of this task of social mobilization, the government claimed, was to be SINAMOS. SINAMOS had three general objectives: 1) the training, orientation, and organization of the national population; 2) the development of entities of social interests; and 3) communication between the government and the population. To accomplish these objectives, SINAMOS incorporated eight existing government agencies with a total budget of $95 million. In addition, it was given virtually complete responsibility for local public works projects which were to be used to generate popular support for the government.[34]

Ambiguities in policy, however, greatly reduced SINAMOS' ability to generate support for the government since its underlying motivation for popular mobilization was its traditional concern for national security. While government technocrats opposed SINAMOS' efforts to put their politics into economic planning, the unions and political parties opposed its efforts to deprive them of their popular leadership. And in the squatter settlements around Lima, SINAMOS' most important field of operation, it constituted an intrusion that attempted "to increase the dependence of the pobladores on the

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[33]Pásara, p. 330.

[34]Sandra L. Woy-Hazleton, "Infrastructure of Participation in Peru: SINAMOS." in *Political Participation in Latin America*, Volume I, *Citizen and State*, eds. John Booth and Mitchell A. Seligson (New York: Holmes & Meier Pub., 1978), p. 195; and Philip, *Peruvian Military Radicals*, p. 129.

government without any concomitant material benefits."[35] Rather than effectively helping the settlements, the government's inordinate concern with using the settlement population as a means to mobilize political support increasingly antagonized the *pobladores*. In the end, SINAMOS frustrated the pobladores' expectations by failing to support their needs much beyond providing land titles.[36]

The Problem of Legitimation

Lipset's definition of legitimacy focuses on a system's capacity to create the belief that its political institutions are the most appropriate.[37] To consider political institutions "appropriate," they need to be acknowledged as representing the people and need also to achieve some measure of satisfactory performance. In both of these areas the "revolutionary" military government made a claim to legitimacy. Although it began its rule with substantial popular support, the GRFA was unable to create new legitimacy or maintain the legitimacy it started with. Why did the military government's attempts to create legitimacy fail?

One answer is evident when examining why the military institutions failed to perform satisfactorily. In political terms, the governments success depended on its distributive capacity. But the

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[35]Dietz, p.190.

[36]Ibid., p. 186.

[37]Lipset, *The Political Man*, p. 77, quoted in van Doorn, p. 20.

government's redistributive efforts only reached those in the upper quarter of the income distribution profile. The military government failed to reach the truly impoverished Peru, partly because the program was founded on the assumption that new petroleum and mineral exports would produce massive state revenues, which, in the end did not materialize.[38] As Pásara states, "The impossibility of sufficiently distributing income was probably the first factor that affected the base of legitimacy that the plan sought."[39] This was further compounded by the government's revolutionary rhetoric, which far surpassed its ability to produce results. In the end reforms were never completely implemented and the government's empty promises remained unfulfilled.[40]

Another answer to why the military failed to create legitimacy is found in examining why the military institutions were not accepted as representing the people. For Pásara, the key variable here is the absence of political incorporation. The military could not create legitimacy because it was unable "to join even those who benefited from the reforms in a movement that would give them the authority of

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[38]Pásara, p. 324; and Julio Cotler, "Democracy and National Integration in Peru," in *The Peruvian Experiment Reconsidered*, eds. Cynthia McClintock and Abraham Lowenthal, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 27.

[39]Pásara, p. 324.

[40]McClintock, "Velasco, Officers, and Citizens," p. 308.

political decision."[41] The absence of popular support ultimately rose from the basic contradiction between the concept of mass mobilization and the hierarchical nature of the military regime. The military's attempt to mobilize popular support failed, then, because it was accompanied by watchful control from above that either coopted or quelled any serious threats to the maintenance of political stability.[42]

The Fall of the Regime

In August 1975, President Velasco was deposed by the military command in a palace coup and replaced by the former Prime Minister, General Francisco Morales Bermúdez. This marked the end of the First Phase of the Peruvian *docenio*, as well as the end of the "revolutionary" policies of the military government. The fall of the Velasco regime occurred under the pressure of extremely unfavorable circumstances. The threat arising from Pinochet's military rule in Chile, the failure to discover large reserves of oil as expected, the worldwide recession, and the rise in oil prices all combined with the

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[41]Pásara, 324.

[42]Peter S. Cleaves and Henry Pease García, "State Autonomy and Military Policy Making," in *The Peruvian Experiment Reconsidered*, eds. Cynthia McClintock and Abraham Lowenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 239-240.

problems associated with the illness Velasco encountered in 1973 to precipitate the downfall of the regime.[43]

However, several fundamental problems arose due to the nature of the military government that further explain the downfall of the regime and that therefore demand closer scrutiny. First, the Velasco government achieved a relatively high autonomy as a political actor. That is, "the state elite [was] not *constrained* by class factions and [had] a significant degree of freedom to impose its design on society."[44] The Velasco government's autonomy meant that it could carry out sweeping reforms and implement socioeconomic structural changes free from most constraints. The problem with high relative autonomy, however, is that the state elite is not supported by civil constituencies and consequently "is almost exclusively dependent upon its own internal unity and coercive powers."[45]

But military unity, although touted as a political asset, can be very difficult to achieve or sustain. Since senior military officers are rarely homogenous in their outlook, institutional military governments are inherently governments of compromise.[46] In Phase

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[43]Philip, *Peruvian Military Radicals*, p. 162; and Cotler, "Democracy and National Integration," pp. 26-27.

[44]Stepan, *The State and Society*, pp. 301-302.

[45]Ibid.; see also Cleaves and García, p. 241.

[46]Philip, "The Military Institution Revisited: Some Notes on Corporatism and Military Rule in Latin America," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 12, 2 (November, 1980): 428.

One, the military's views on economic reform and nationalistic self-assertion were held throughout the military and therefore guaranteed a strong degree of internal unity, which was then strengthened by the regime's initial success.[47] But even at this point the seeds for future problems were present. Philip states:

> Overall, the government's political support was based upon perspectives that were too divergent, and the price of unity was too high. Too often, the result of compromise was that no worthwhile goals could be properly pursued, and no valuable support could be won.[48]

Due to internal compromises, the military government had difficulty delivering on promises, resulting in creating more opponents than it could coopt, eliminate, or ignore.

The Velasco regime's autonomy also meant that it was isolated and consequently constrained by its limited political base. As discussed above, the fact that all attempts to create legitimacy failed further isolated the regime. Then, as many of the reforms increased rather than reduced demands, political conflicts became increasingly evident and military unity began to crumble. The reforms had been enacted to reduce political conflict and rebellion by removing the problems that would lead to conflict. But as the conflicts intensified after the reforms, it was clear that even the beneficiaries of the reforms did not support the Velasco government.

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[47]Philip, *Peruvian Military Radicals*, p. 116.
[48]Ibid., p. 117.

The lack of popular support for the regime was clearly demonstrated by the Lima riots in February 1975. What began as a police strike, was followed by a large scale riot and looting which had to be suppressed by the army.[49] In the end, the absence of a bond between the Velasco government and the popular masses assured the officers removing Velasco from power that they could do so without fear of any protest. In fact, the institutional Manifesto naming Morales Bermúdez president encountered virtually no opposition from the popular organizations that had been created by the revolution.[50]

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[49]Ibid., pp. 156-157.
[50]Gorman, p. 25.

CHAPTER 3

ARGENTINA: 1976-1983

Shortly after coming to power, the leaders of the ruling junta made the following statement to the people of Argentina:

> The armed forces have assumed the direction of the state in fulfillment of their unrenounceable obligation. They do so only after calm meditation about the irreparable consequences to the destiny of the nation that would be caused by the adoption of a different stance.[1]

The military thus began their "process of national reorganization," promising not to return power to civilians until the nation's problems had been solved. The result, however, was a period of chaos unprecedented in the history of Argentina, and characterized by economic ruin, by the ruthless use of repression leading to thousands of *desaparecidos*, and by the disastrous involvement in the war over the Malvinas Islands.

When the military came to power they had the approval of most of the people as well as the active support of the business and commercial right, who looked forward to stable rule and effective economic management.[2] The conditions that preceded the coup

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[1]Announcement by the junta reprinted in Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, eds, *The Politics of Antipolitics: The Military in Latin America*, Second Edition, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 197.

[2]George Philip, "The Fall of the Argentine Military," *Third World Quarterly*, 6, 3 (1984), p. 627.

caused most people to believe that something needed to be done and that the military was the only actor that could do it. Many notable civilians, such as former President Arturo Frondizi and newspaper editor Jacobo Timmerman, supported the military intervention.[3] But popular support for the military government faded quickly and, in the end, even the core members of the military's original coalition opposed the regime. The military government's lack of legitimacy ultimately led to the decision to invade the Malvinas Islands in a last ditch effort to rally popular support.[4]

As with the analysis of Peru, this chapter begins with a sketch of the conditions leading to the coup and the objectives the Argentine military sought to achieve while in power. I then analyze the military government's attempts to create legitimacy and examine why those attempts failed. Finally, I discuss the fall of the regime and how the failure to create legitimacy contributed to its demise.

Background to the Coup

After Peronista candidate Héctor Cámpora won the presidential election in 1973, he invited Perón back from exile and then resigned, clearing the way for new elections which would bring Perón back to

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[3]Daniel Poneman, *Argentina: Democracy on Trial*, (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987), p. 35.

[4]Harry C. Thornsvard, "Argentina, the Military in Power: 1976-1982," (M.A. Thesis: University of Texas at Austin, 1983), p. 51.

power. The Peronist left, mainly the Montoneros, which had enjoyed a position of influence with Cámpora, found themselves at odds with Perón's more moderate policies and soon resorted to open terrorism. While the Montoneros undertook a campaign to annihilate union leaders and the Trotskyite Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP) prepared for renewed guerilla warfare, right wing terrorist groups entered the arena, most notably the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance (AAA). In November 1974 the government declared a state of siege after the assassination of the Chief of Police and gave the Army complete authority to deal with the terrorism. Violence was out of control and by 1975 the Montoneros, the ERP, and the AAA were claiming a life every four hours.[5]

Conditions in the economic arena paralleled those in the political. While the economy had flourished from a world commodity boom in 1973 and inflation had fallen after Perón negotiated wage and price controls, this boom proved to be short lived. The wage and price controls of the *Pacto Social* fell apart after Perón's death in July of 1974, increasing the demands and pressures on the politically inexperienced Isabel Perón. As oil prices soared due to OPEC price-

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[5]David Rock, "The Military in Politics in Argentina, 1973-83," in *The Politics of Antipolitics: The Military in Latin America.* Second Edition, eds. Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), pp. 322-324; and Peter G. Snow, "Military Government in Argentina," in *New Military Politics in Latin America.* ed. Robert Wesson, (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 44.

fixing policies, Argentina's oil bill rose from $58 million in 1972 (3.1% of total imports) to $586 million in 1974 (15.1% of total imports). To pay for its oil bill and other imports, the government resorted to using its reserves, which quickly declined from a $1.3 billion surplus in 1973 to a deficit of $1 billion in 1975.[6] By 1976, inflation had increased to annual rates over 900% and default on external debt seemed imminent.[7]

The Military's Objectives

Seeing the prevailing anarchic condition as posing a great threat to the security of the nation, the military felt compelled to intervene in order to restore stability and economic prosperity. In contrast to the pre-1960s military interventions, the military's objectives were not simply to reestablish order and quickly return to a constitutional regime. Instead, the military announced political, economic, and social objectives that would require extended rule.

In the Act of National Reorganization, the military government stated that their objectives were to restore national security, economic efficiency, "authentic representative democracy," and "proper moral

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[6]Rock, pp. 323-325.

[7]Jan Peter Wogart, "Combining Price Stabilization with Trade and Financial Liberalization Policies: The Argentine Experiment, 1976-1981," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 25, 4 (Nov, 1983): 446.

values."[8] The military's aim was to completely reorganize the nation, to close the "historic cycle" of populist public mores begun by the rise of Peronism in the 1940s, and to open a new one. To this end, the military's overarching objective was to restore national security. The military waged a total war against subversion and smashed all political opposition. For the military government, drastic action was required since civil society was dying of a "cancer" that required immediate surgery to "extirpate the diseased tissue."[9]

Since national security was viewed as dependent on economic development, the restoration of economic efficiency became a vitally important objective. The junta vowed to restore economic growth by freeing the economy from the inefficient shackles of state control and by embarking on a free market campaign.[10] Yet the military was hesitant about cutting fiscal spending due to their business concerns associated with the Dirección General de Fabricaciones Militares, the equivalent of the military-industrial complex in Argentina. Nevertheless, they wanted to change course from the populist Peronist program that had brought hyper-inflation, economic stagnation, and

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[8]David Pion-Berlin, "The Fall of Military Rule in Argentina: 1976-1983," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 27 (1985): 57.

[9]Corradi, Juan E., "Military Government and State Terrorism in Argentina," in *The Politics of Antipolitics: The Military in Latin America*, Second Edition, eds. Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 337.

[10]Pion-Berlin, p. 57.

social unrest.[11] Thus, in an effort to restore foreign investor confidence in the economy, the junta began an attack on the balance-of-payment deficit and the high inflation by attempting to control demand through wage restraints.[12]

Along with abolishing subversion and restoring economic growth, the junta sought to normalize political life. The military's answer for reducing the political conflict that had stalemated previous governmental action was to abolish "politics" altogether. The junta reduced the number of important social actors by dissolving Congress, dismissing supreme court justices, intervening provincial governments, and banning political parties. To further restrict the unions, the military government banned strikes, froze union bank accounts, and appointed military officers as overseers. In addition, the threat of force and actual police action was used to quiet political opposition.[13]

The Search for Legitimacy

How did the military government justify its new role as ruler and what were its claims to legitimacy? Throughout the history of military involvement in Argentine politics, all military coups have received civilian support from one or another segment of society. This

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[11]Ibid., p. 58.

[12]Rock, p. 327.

[13]Corradi, p. 337; and Poneman, p. 35.

persistent resorting to the military helped convince them that they were the principal guardians of the national interest.[14] Consequently, when national interests were at stake, the military believed it to be their institutional duty to take action.

The military also tended to believe that the nation's problems stemmed from politics and the general politicization of society. They were disillusioned with civilian government's inability to execute consistent development, with the corruption, the incompetence, and the constant political conflict. This latter intense, destructive competition, that emphasized party affiliation over the good of the country, along with the inability of civilian politicians to form effective coalitions, led the military to conclude that to promote economic development and stability, politics had to be eliminated.[15]

During the 1960's, the principle of national security was invoked as a justification for military intervention in several Latin American countries. In Argentina under General Ongania this principle had been codified as a Law of National Security in 1967. Similar to the doctrine taught in Peru's CAEM, its principal belief is that national security depends on economic development. The lack of economic development leads to social unrest and is, therefore, the enemy of the people. Since combating the nation's enemies is a function of the military, it is the military's duty to intervene when civilian

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[14]Poneman, p. 8.

[15]Wynia, 1978, p. 242.

governments do not perform "adequately." The conclusion reached is that the military, then, must assume responsibility for economic development in order to maintain national security.[16]

The military's beliefs that they were the principal guardians of the national interest, and that civilian politics produced economic and social disorder, combined with the view that national security was dependent on economic development to provide the military ample justification to take power and rule for an extended period of time. The military government's objectives referred to national security, the reorganization of the economy, and the restructuring of politics and society. For the military, these objectives represented the " ındamental interests of the nation," and constituted their bases of legitimacy for extended military rule.[17]

As with the Peruvian military, the Argentine military government saw itself as acting on behalf of the people and in the best interest of the nation. Having replaced an ineffective and corrupt democratic government, the military regime sought to create an alternative legitimacy for authoritarian rule based on restored political and social

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[16]Peter G. Snow, *Political Forces in Argentina*, Revised Edition, (New York: Praeger, 1979) pp. 40-41.

[17]Andres Fontana, "Political Decision Making by a Military Corporation: Argentina, 1976-1983," (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Texas at Austin, 1987), p. 10.

order and on renewed economic growth.[18] Due to the threatening anarchic conditions caused by rampant terrorism, the military government was welcomed by most affluent members of the country as well as its upper and middle classes. Consequently, the junta led by General Jorge Rafael Videla held greater strength and was given more freedom to maneuver than any previous military government.[19]

The first task was to restore the order and stability that the nation needed to survive. For the military, the answer to the plague of terrorism was to combat anti-governmental violence with even greater violence. The "Dirty War," which had begun to some extent in July of 1974, was pursued with single-minded determination. The military organized into small, autonomous anti-guerrilla cells in order to beat the enemy at his own game. Allied with right-wing terror groups, the military institutionalized to midnight kidnappings, torture, and executions. These methods proved very successful; by the end of 1978 little was heard from the Montoneros and the ERP had almost ceased to function.[20]

Assassinations by these two groups totaled 30 or so in 1978, a sharp decline from the estimated 700 the previous year and almost

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[18]Edward C. Epstein, "Legitimacy, Institutionalization, and Opposition in Exclusionary Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Regimes: The Situation of the 1980s," *Comparative Politics*, 17, 1 (October, 1984): 37.

[19]Rock, p. 326.

[20]Snow, "Military Government in Argentina," p. 44.

1500 in [illegible]. But as the total assassinations by leftist terrorist was decreasing, there was a disproportionate rise in the number of people who simply "disappeared."[21] It was evident that the military had broadened the war on subversion to include anybody suspected of plotting resistance. A report on the *desaparecidos* issued in 1978 estimated that 37 percent of the victims were factory workers, most of which had been union leaders; fewer than 20 percent were guerillas.[22] In the end, a governmental commission reported that 8,961 persons had disappeared between 1976 and 1980, although the highest estimate reached 30,000.[23]

The military did succeed in repressing the threat of subversion that had immobilized the country. But the reports of torture, murder, and the thousands of *desaparecidos* led to the public's disgust at the military's conduct during the Dirty War. International condemnation over reported human rights abuses further deteriorated the military's position that there had been no abuses. The public's growing disrespect and fear led to the loss of any popular mandate the military

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[21]Dennis R. Gordon, "Withdrawal in Disgrace: Decline of the Argentine Military, 1976-1983," in *The Decline of Military Regimes: The Civilian Influence*, ed. Constantine P. Danopoulos, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p. 209.

[22]Rock, p. 327.

[23]Gordon, p. 209.

might have had and the collapse of any legitimacy the military government might have claimed.[24]

Along with stamping out subversion, the military also sought to eradicate the factors allowing its existence by restoring economic growth. The military's answer for the ailing economy was orthodox liberal free trade. This policy gained support from the military's new constituency, the industrial and agricultural elites and the financial community who had felt threatened by the Peronist regime. For the military, achieving high rates of noninflationary growth was to help create a new type of legitimacy among those benefiting from the policies. But the government program would initially require sacrifices from factory workers and part of the middle class. The military's thought that its autonomy could insulate the junta from partisan interests and demands, enabling them to enact unpopular policies that would ultimately benefit the nation and help legitimize authoritarian rule.[25]

According to Martinez de Hoz, the new finance minister, government economic policies had previously permitted artificially high wages, protected inefficient industries, and allowed wasteful public expenditures on subsidies and social programs. So the

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[24]Thornsvard, pp. 41-43; and David Pion-Berlin, "The Fall of Military Rule in Argentina: 1976-1983," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 27 (1985): 71.

[25]Snow, "Military Government in Argentina," p. 42; and Epstein, p. 39.

Minister opened the economy to foreign competition, liberalized financial and exchange markets, cut wages by as much as half, cut government spending, and emphasized agriculture and other sectors enjoying a comparative advantage. Although initially successful, these policies proved to be disastrous. The removal of tariffs along with the removal of government incentives for industry (75% of which were concentrated in steel, petrochemicals, and wood pulp products) resulted in the "deindustrialization" of the Argentine economy. Between 1975 and 1980 industry employment declined 26 percent and industrial production dropped by 17 percent.[26]

The liberalization of financial markets and foreign exchange controls also produced some unanticipated effects. A $290 million loan from the IMF along with high interest rates led to an influx of foreign capital. Although productive sectors benefited from the increased capital, it also caused an increase in speculation, corruption, and inflation. In March of 1980 four of the nation's largest financial institutions collapsed, touching off a financial panic and a flight of capital. Under Martinez de Hoz's leadership the Argentine external debt grew form $8.2 billion in 1977 to $24.5 billion in 1980.[27] By this point, almost every socio-economic sector opposed the regime's economic policies, including the most conservative

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[26]Gordon, p. 210.
[27]Ibid., p. 211.

interest group that represented the giant wheat farmers and cattle ranching families.[28]

The Problem of Legitimation

Why did the military government fail in its attempts to create legitimacy? To answer this question we need to return once again to Lipset's definition of legitimacy, which focuses on the capacity of a system to engender the belief that its political institutions are the most appropriate.[29] To be considered legitimate, political institutions must be acknowledged as representing the people and must also perform satisfactorily.

Although the Argentine military government claimed that it would solve the nation's problems, in the end it failed to perform in an acceptable manner. The military did have success in establishing order and stability in contrast to the chaos that existed before the coup. But as the memories of civilian failures and the disorder that preceded the coup faded with time, the success of the military would have to rest on its economic accomplishments.[30]

In the end, the military failed to curb inflation or to spark economic growth. In addition, the military seemingly remained unaffected by warnings complaints from even powerful conservative

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[28]Pion-Berlin, p. 59.
[29]Lipset, *Political Man*, p. 77, quoted in van Doorn, p. 20.
[30]Epstein, pp. 39, 51.

pressure groups and continued relentlessly to pursue their course of action. By stressing positive trends in a set of macroeconomic variables, the military disregarded the setbacks experienced by agricultural and industrial sectors. Pion-Berlin notes that while the military government congratulated "themselves on the basis of highly selective evidence, labor and entrepreneurial sectors were made to bear the costs through losses in income, purchasing power, and profits."[31] The end result was that the military did not receive popular support for its policies nor effectively create legitimacy for its regime.

In addition to failing to perform satisfactorily, the regime's exclusionary tactics prevented the military institutions from being accepted as representing the people. Although the military claimed to represent the national interest, the junta insulated itself from societal demands by demobilizing the popular classes as well as denying the dominant classes access to state policy-making circles.[32] With this problem in mind, Ricci and Fitch aptly summarize the military's dilemma in creating support for the regime:

> These regimes lost support because they were structured not to provide political linkages to civil society (or to enforce such linkages through formal mechanisms of accountability) but, rather, to impose the "bitter medicine" deemed necessary by a

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[31]Pion-Berlin, pp. 59, 71-72.
[32]Ibid., p. 60.

> narrow civil-military elite that presumed to have remedies for society's economic and political ills.[33]

In Argentina this imposition resulted in the military regime's inability to legitimize its rule.

The Fall of the Regime

By the time General Roberto Viola was chosen to succeed Videla, problems with military unity had increased as economic problems persisted, as evidenced by the devaluations of the peso from 2,000 to over 10,000 to the dollar.[34] Viola, recognizing the public dissatisfaction with the economic and political policies, considered restoring some rights to unions and political parties and even suggested possible redemocratization. But the Army commander, General Leopoldo Galtieri, publicly responded that elections would not be held, revealing the extent of disunity within the military.[35]

Viola was replaced by Galtieri after serving only nine months of a five year term. The economic crisis continued, however, and by February 1982, business failures were already 50 percent higher than in all of 1981. Major pressure groups such as the Buenos Aires

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[33]María Susana Ricci and J. Samuel Fitch, "Ending Military Regimes in Argentina: 1966-1973 and 1976-1983," in *The Military and Democracy: The Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America*, eds. Louis W. Goodman, Johanna S. R. Mendelson and Juan Rial, (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1990), p. 67.

[34]Epstein, pp. 46-47.

[35]Gordon, p. 216.

Commercial Stock Exchange and the Argentine Industrial Union openly criticized the government economic policy, while the trade unions staged a large demonstration in Buenos Aires on March 30. The *Multipartidaria*, the alliance of the major political parties, also openly condemned the military government.[36] Hoping to quiet public criticism and restore a sense of military unity, Galtieri turned to the age old ploy of foreign adventure. The Malvinas war, however, did not go well for the Argentine military. Defeated, completely discredited, and totally divided, the military had no choice but to return to the barracks.

The military's defeat in the hands of the British, however, although accelerating the military's downfall, was not the primary cause of their demise. The root cause of the military's fall from power involve more fundamental problems. First, in shielding itself from societal pressures, the military junta achieved a high level of autonomy as a political actor. But as with the Peruvian military, this exclusivity meant that the Argentine military government could impose unpopular policies on the population while relatively free of constraints. It also meant that in the absence of a civilian base of support, the military was almost totally dependent on its ability to coerce and on its internal unity.

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[36]Epstein, pp. 46-47.

Initially, the military government maintained a high degree of internal unity due to its perception of the seriousness of the guerilla threat. But as repression eradicated the guerilla threat, internal divisions surfaced over political strategy, economic policy, and the power and autonomy of the repressive apparatus. In an effort to avoid major rivalries, government ministries had been divided between the three services. This structure proved unwieldy, however, and resulted in the fragmentation of the state apparatus, leading to decision making that was subordinated to the corporate interests and internal conflicts of the individual services. As Ricci and Fitch note: "Governing by thirds created not only inertia but reciprocal veto powers that made decision making extraordinarily difficult and inefficient."[37]

In addition, persistent economic problems served to strengthen the existing disunity. Epstein points out that this led to "the weakening of military resolution to pursue the goals previously followed regardless of the obvious, high social costs," and consequently allowed the space for the first significant opposition in years.[38] The military regime's inability to legitimize its rule was evident by the mass unrest and the repeated calls for a return to democracy. In the end, upper class businessmen and middle-class professionals who had been part of the military's original coalition

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[37]Ricci and Fitch, p. 59.

[38]Epstein, pp. 51-52.

opposed the continuation of the military regime. Although the lack of popular support (or even support of the upper class) did not by and of itself force the military to step down, it did highlight the fact that their policies had failed and that the country was worse off than when they had taken power. In the end, this failure, along with the absence of popular legitimacy, exacerbated the military's lack of unity and gave their civilian opponents the opportunity to take advantage of the growing divisions among the officers.[39]

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[39]Wynia, *The Politics of Latin American Development*, Third Edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 282.

CHAPTER 4

PERU AND ARGENTINA IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

While the previous two chapters have examined Peru and Argentina individually, the purpose of this chapter is to bring the two cases into comparative perspective. I begin by comparing the ways the two regimes attempted to establish legitimacy, suggest explanations for the differences in their approaches, and then analyze why both regimes failed in their attempts.

A primary difference in the two approaches is that the Velasco government in Peru made an overt effort to create its own popular legitimacy immediately after taking power by initiating socioeconomic reforms and by implementing nationalistic policies. The Argentine military, on the other hand, relied more on its belief that they were acting on behalf of the people and as the principal guardians of the national interest. The Argentine military government's objectives of restoring national security and reorganizing the inefficient economy represented the nation's fundamental interests. In essence, the military regime tried to legitimize its rule on the basis of restored political order and rekindled economic growth.

In both cases the military thought it had a mandate from the people to solve the nation's problems and that success in doing so would ultimately benefit the people and, consequently, legitimize their

rule.[1] But in the Argentine case, public disgust over the military's Dirty War removed any legitimacy the military might have had. As economic problems persisted, Galtieri attempted to gain support by appointing civilians as governors and state administrators, by meeting with Peronist leaders in an effort to gain labor support, and by announcing plans for redemocratization. Galtieri's attempts not only failed, but also increased the disunity within the military. Finally, in a last ditch effort to gain popular support for the regime and restore military unity, Galtieri launched an invasion of the Malvinas Islands.[2]

The Peruvian military government also saw itself as acting on behalf of the people. But instead of seeking legitimacy by establishing order and economic efficiency, the Velasco government sought to create legitimacy by its policies of political populism and economic nationalism.[3] The GRFA felt that their reforms, which aimed at freeing the popular masses from exploitation, would create sufficient support for their policies. To this end, the military government advanced unprecedented reforms immediately after coming to power, including the redistribution of agrarian land as well as a program for industrial workers to gain partial ownership of their enterprises. As the reforms met with conflict and opposition instead of support, the military government embarked on creating a "full participatory social

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[1]Wynia, Third Edition , p. 264.
[2]Pion-Berlin, pp. 68-69.
[3]Stepan, *State and Society*, p. 77.

democracy" that would mobilize the mass support needed to legitimize its rule. But, as discussed earlier, SINAMOS failed to generate support for the government due to its concern for national security as well as the basic contradiction between the hierarchical nature of military organization and the concept of mass mobilization.[4]

Perhaps the most notable difference between the two approaches is that the Peruvian military government, focusing on socioeconomic reforms, sought to incorporate worker and peasant groups into new political and economic systems as well as to "encapsulate [them] cooptatively" into associational state organizations. In contrast, the Argentine military government, with its focus on political order and economic efficiency, sought to exclude autonomous organizations from the political arena in order to reduce the demands on the new political and economic system. In addition, the organizations were "coercively encapsulated" into state monitored organizations. Peru and Argentina, then, correspond to what Stepan terms inclusionary corporatism and exclusionary corporatism, respectively.[5]

Although the two attempts to establish legitimacy differed greatly, they did have some similarities. In their post-coup proclamations both regimes justified their interventions by claiming that the civilian governments had been corrupt, self-serving, and ineffective in dealing with the problems facing the nations. In

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[4]Cleaves and Garcia, pp. 239.

[5]Stepan, *State and Society*, Chapter Three, especially Table 3.1.

addition, both military regimes were accorded a good measure of legitimacy as they took power. In the case of Argentina, the hope that the military could solve the economic crisis and control the threatening conditions caused by terrorism meant that the military came to power with a good degree of popular support.[6] Although the conditions were different in Peru, the military government gained immediate popular support as the result of solving the IPC scandal, a problem that the Belaúnde government had failed to handle.[7]

How can we account for the differences in the two approaches? First, the attempts to establish legitimacy differed, in large part, because the perceived problems facing the military regimes differed. As Palmer states, the main issues in Peru were "relations with a foreign company, party politics immobilism, economic uncertainty, and scandal."[8] In Argentina, on the other hand, the military government was concerned primarily with what they perceived as the imminent security threat posed by terrorist violence. Consequently, the Argentine military's initial actions were concerned, in large part, with repression, which soon became institutionalized. The fact that the Peruvian military had defeated the guerrillas in 1966 meant that

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[6]Philip, "Fall of the Argentine Military," p. 627.
[7]Middlebrook and Palmer, p. 15.
[8]Palmer, p. 139.

they were more concerned with nationalism and the generally long-term aspects of development.[9]

The difference in threat level is a key factor in explaining the differences in the approaches taken to legitimize military rule. This difference manifested itself in the respective national security doctrines. In Argentina, the war against leftist subversion was viewed as a permanent and total war, with no distinction between periods of peace or war, whose "objective [was] the annihilation of the adversary, not merely the taking of the adversary by force."[10] For the military, this moral war involved two opposing views; either one was for the military or against them. Consequently, then, almost anything the military viewed as contrary to the "Argentine way of life" could be interpreted as subversion. In this way, Rouquié states,

> not only was all opposition considered criminal, but also the most recent products of Western culture: non-figurative art, psychoanalysis, sociology and modern mathematics were officially banned.[11]

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[9]Stepan, "The New Professionalism," p. 146.

[10]Carina Perelli, "The Military's Perception of Threat in the Southern Cone of South America," in *The Military and Democracy: The Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America*, eds. Louis W. Goodman, Johanna S. R. Mendelson and Juan Rial, (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1990), p. 100.

[11]Rouquié, "Argentina: The Departure of the Military - End of a Political Cycle or Just Another Episode?" *International Affairs*, 59, 4 (August, 1983): 577.

Although the general notion that national security was dependent on development existed in both countries, the Argentine extreme view of what constituted national security had no counterpart in Peru.

But the difference in national security doctrines is not what accounts for the difference in approaches to legitimizing military rule. The effects of the national security doctrine were to serve as a mobilizing ideology for the installation of long-term military government in both Peru and Argentina. A key difference was that the military radicals who held power in Peru had not attended CAEM, where military intellectuals had developed Peru's national security doctrine. For the most part, the radicals had come from the intelligence services and were the veterans of the counterinsurgency campaigns of the 1960s.[12] It was these officers who argued for quick structural change and attempts to build a political base of support among newly mobilized groups. The more conservative CAEM-trained officers opposed popular mobilization and sought to water down the radicals' populist policies in order to achieve more effective economic management.[13] Argentina, on the other hand, had not defeated its guerrillas nor had they experienced the radicalization that apparently occurred in the Peruvian intelligence service as a result of the counterinsurgency campaigns.

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[12]Stepan, *State and Society*, p. 135.

[13]Philip, "Military Institution Revisited," p. 427.

There were also three factors present in Peru and absent in Argentina that created the possibility for an inclusionary reformist military government in Peru. First, compared to Argentina, the level of social mobilization in Peru was very low. This meant that both demands by the population on the government were relatively low and that there was a great deal that the government could do. In addition, the cultural background of Peru's large Indian population was such that their demands on the system were minimized. Lastly, the fact that APRA, the nation's largest mass-based party, had moved from the left to the center-right, and that the left was too fragmented to offer any alternative, meant that a gap remained for the military to fill.[14]

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the problem of legitimacy for military rule, it is necessary to go beyond comparing the ways the two regimes attempted to establish legitimacy or even the individual reasons for why the military regimes failed to legitimize their rule. We must further analyze why both regimes failed in their attempts. In looking at the problem of legitimation in the previous chapters, we used Lipset's definition of legitimacy: "the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for society."[15] For political institutions to be considered appropriate, they would need to

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[14]Palmer, pp. 135-136.

[15]Lipset, *Political Man*, p. 77, in van Doorn, p. 20.

achieve a measure of satisfactory performance and would also need to be acknowledged as representing the people.

Although differing in their approaches, both military governments presumed not only to know the national interest but also to know how to solve the nation's problems. But both failed to perform satisfactorily. A basic problem contributing to this failure was the problem of military unity and the fact that institutional military regimes are inherently governments of compromise.[16] In the case of Peru, the compromises necessary to maintain unity among the broadly divergent perspectives held within the military meant that "no worthwhile goals could be properly pursued, and no valuable support could be won."[17] In Argentina, government ministries were divided among the three services in an attempt to avoid major rivalries. What resulted, however, was the fragmentation of the state apparatus that made government decision-making inefficient as well as extremely difficult.[18] In both cases, policy failures led to greater internal divisions that made effective decision-making much more difficult and, in turn, greatly diminished the regimes' abilities to achieve the satisfactory performance necessary to legitimize their rule.

In addition, both regimes failed in their attempts to create legitimacy simply because military institutions were not accepted as

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[16]Philip, "Military Institution Revisited," p. 428.
[17]Philip, *Peruvian Military Radicals*, p. 117.
[18]Ricci and Fitch, p. 59.

representing the people. Although claiming to represent the national interest, both regimes achieved a level of autonomy that enabled them to insulate themselves from societal constraints (as well as inputs and feedback). The Argentine military's exclusionary policies meant that the government set out to demobilize the popular classes while denying the political elites access to state policy-making circles. Consequently, the Argentine military was unable to create legitimacy because the regime was structured to impose its view of the national interest on society instead of providing institutional linkages between the state and society.[19]

Although its policies were generally inclusionary and reformist, the Peruvian military proved just as unsuccessful in creating legitimacy as the repressive Argentine regime. Although the Velasco government attempted to create a participatory structure to mobilize popular support for the regime, it was not willing to give authority for political decisions to its citizens. The lack of political incorporation rose from the inherent contradiction between the military regime's hierarchical organization and the idea of mass mobilization.[20] In the end, conflict from the attempt to mobilize popular support emerged because it was controlled from above so that any threats to national security could be readily coopted or put down.

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[19]Ibid., p. 67.
[20]Cleaves and García, p. 240.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that establishing legitimacy was a fundamental concern of both the Peruvian and Argentine military regimes and that their failure to do so contributed significantly to their downfall. While the second point has already been adequately discussed, the first point has not been directly addressed. It is evident that establishing legitimacy was important to both regimes by their concerted efforts to legitimize their rule. Although this is easier to see with the reformist policies implemented by the Velasco government in order to gain popular support, it was also the case with the Argentine military.

Even though their policies were exclusionary, the Argentine military government sought to legitimate its rule by restoring political order and by renewing economic growth.[21] The military felt that Argentina's political chaos and economic crisis posed a great threat to the nation's security and, consequently, required drastic measures. Galtieri, Wynia states, did not ask civilians if they agreed with the Dirty War because he was "confident that they would one day thank him for restoring order to a nation that was falling into chaos in 1976."[22] Makin notes that the Argentine military "have always wanted to be one with the people" but that the fight against

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[21]Epstein, p. 37.
[22]Wynia, Third Edition, p. 264.

subversion and communism required repressive measures.[23] As their unpopularity in the late 1970s grew greater than ever, the military was left with one option that would bring popular support: reclaim the Malvinas.

Palmer states that the "classic dilemma" faced by all authoritarian regimes is the problem of "providing for institutional linkages between citizen and system that are responsive to the needs and concerns of both."[24] Wynia echoes this idea when he states the principal weakness of military authoritarian regimes is that they "have yet to create enduring solutions to the problems of political participation, communication between the government and its citizens, and political succession."[25] As is evident in the analysis above, both Peru and Argentina failed to get past the dilemma of political participation and institutional linkages. The Peruvian military came closer to finding a solution than did the Argentine military (who made no effort to establish links with civil society until the very end).

In the end, military governments cannot solve the problem of political participation because it is a fundamental contradiction that cannot be reconciled by somehow changing the nature of the military

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[23]Guillermo Makin, "Argentina: The Authoritarian Impasse," in *The Political Dilemmas of Military Regimes*, eds. Christopher Clapham and George Philip, (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 165.
[24]Palmer, p. 145.
[25]Wynia, 1978, p. 241.

regime. Thus, military governments will be measured against the yardsticks of institutional linkages and political participation and found wanting. Furthermore, as Fitch states, preference for democracy constitutes a barrier to the "long-term institutionalization of military regimes, particularly conservative regimes dedicated to the political and economic exclusion of the popular sectors."[26]

It seems obvious, however, that if they had somehow created an "enduring solution" to political participation then they would cease to be institutional military regimes; they would transform into something else. What they would change into is unknown since no institutional military regime has ever solved that problem. A system of permanent military rule seems ultimately contradictory since armed forces have not governed directly without subverting their own essence and eventually ceasing to be an army.[27]

Given the inability to legitimize their rule as well as the consequences of that failure, one would hope the military in Peru and Argentina have learned a valuable lesson. But it is unlikely that the military will give unequivocal support to civilian governments, even though in the long term only civilian governments can sustain legitimacy. The military apparently do not see the rise of democracy as a definite turning point that changes their role in government and may be waiting for an "appropriate moment" before they again take

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[26]Fitch, p. 32.

[27]Rouquié, "Demilitarization," p. 111; also Ricci and Fitch, p. 68.

action. The Argentine military, Rouquié states, still "celebrate their victory over subversion and publicly justify the 'dirty war," in spite of the public's outrage over their actions.[28] And in Peru, many *velasquista* officers now regard the government's decision not to establish a political party as their fatal error.[29] Conceivably, this is something that may be "fixed" the next time the military takes power. Clearly, there are no guarantees that the military will not attempt to rule again sometime in the future. The hope remains, nonetheless, that the civilian governments will achieve a level of supremacy over the military that will help to consolidate democratic rule.

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[28]See Rouquié, *The Military and the State in Latin America*, Translated by Paul E. Sigmund, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 404.

[29]Cynthia McClintock, "Peru: Precarious Regimes, Authoritarian and Democratic," in *Volume Four, Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America*, eds. Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, (Boulder: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1989), p. 350.

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